

Dear Family Member,

Welcome to our next unit of study, “Developing Characters’ Relationships.”

We are beginning our second unit in the Benchmark Advance program. As a reminder, each three-week unit features one topic. As with the previous unit, I am providing suggested activities you and your child can do together at home to build on the work we’re doing in class.

In this unit, your child will read stories in which he or she compares characters and analyzes their relationships with each other. She will read several excerpts from Jason Reynold’s acclaimed novel, *As Brave as You*. This will help students get an idea of how different characters interact with each other, and it will also help them understand what makes some characters more likable than others. In addition to this example of realistic fiction, the unit also includes some letters, as well as a biography.

I’m looking forward to this exciting unit, exploring with your children what makes characters “tick.” It will be fun to discover how they make connections between the characters in the stories and people in real life.

As always, should you have any questions about our reading program or about your child’s progress, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Developing Characters' Relationships

In this unit, we'll read excerpts from Jason Reynold's novel, *As Brave as You*, and think in depth about the question "Why do we value certain qualities in people?" Here are some activities designed to continue the conversation about characters to build on the skills and concepts your child is learning in school. I know exploring this topic together will be fun for both of you!

Topic Connection

Top Five List

Discuss with your child the question we have been discussing in class: "Why do we value certain qualities in people?" Help your child focus on qualities that people consider most admirable by working together to make a top five list of the most important character traits of a good person. Then discuss why that value is important. Next to each of the character traits, list a real person or fictional character who has that trait.

Vocabulary Connection

Character Association Game

Your child is learning new words that will help them describe characters and their actions. Make a list of five words one might use to describe a person's character, such as **brave**, **curious**, **proud**, **stubborn**, or **generous**. Review the meaning of each word with your child. Then fold a sheet of paper into five columns and write the words as the headings of the columns. Brainstorm a list of examples of how someone would act if they or their actions were described in such a way. For example, how would someone behave who is curious? What would a *generous* person be like?

Comprehension Connection

Character Comparison

As your child reads from various excerpts of *As Brave as You*, he or she should be able to choose the character that he or she can make a comparison with. Ask your child to think about the characters of Genie, Ernie, Grandpop, Grandma, and then choose one of them. Make a Venn diagram with your child's name on one circle and the character's name on the other. Ask your child to fill out the diagram to make the comparison.

Word Study Connections

Character Study

As your child reads more from the excerpts of *As Brave as You*, ask your child to give you examples of Genie's behavior. Fold two sheets of stacked paper in half to form a booklet. Ask your child to make a short character study of Genie that illustrates his personality.